3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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The Dance must have helped appreciably to enhance the status of the elderly participants, a little old to take active part in the actual hunting and game-food providing, and to have given them a feeling of still being economically useful members of the tribe. The same *mutatis mutandis* would be true of the old women in connection with their own Dance.

After the more or less secret rites inside the lodge of the Dance were over, the dancers ran a race. After the close of the dance, the camp moved.

The elderly men who as chief vowers or associates had gone once through the Dance had reached the end of the ritual trail and became members of the unorganized "retired old men," of equal rank in this respect with their ceremonial grandfathers. After the dance the grandfathers could not control their grandsons, as grandfathers could after other Dances. After going through this Dance, the dancer though entering in a sense the "inactive" ranks could still be called on to function as a ceremonial grandfather. He moreover was allowed very considerable freedom and latitude previously denied him. With his Punishers' Dance grandfather he contracted a relationship somewhat similar to the enemy-friend one. In general, while of course he was given no leave to commit grave crimes, he was allowed much freedom in talking or acting vulgarly or obscenely in public and in the presence of consanguineal or actual relatives toward whom respect and avoidance observances had been strictly required of him prior to his graduation into the class of "retired old men."[88]

He could, for instance, talk pretty freely with his own brother-in-law who was also a "retired old man" about matters concerning elimination and reproduction, and could indulge in a large degree of vulgarity and obscenity before a group which included even his own mother-in-law, and no one had the right to criticize him for this or protest against his behavior.

If, for example, he took off his breechcloth in the presence of a group that included such relatives, someone might say to him: "That's going too far." But the old man might answer: "I have sat on the sage brush. I have the right to do this."

[88] Cf. Flannery, 1953, p. 196.

4: Flannery & Cooper E-5 (1939-1945) 1946
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

525 did not want to lose it," and her grandmother used to advise her against gambling lest she lose valued things. All in all it looks as if economic considerations had little to do with such disapproval of gambling as was current among the Gros Ventre; if anything, economic considerations and concepts of property use and disposal would in the main have reinforced approval.

To sum up, Gros Ventre attitudes on gambling appear to have been influenced very much by concern for altruism and accord, very little by economic values.

PAST AND PRESENT

525 773 To round out the picture we have tried to give of Gros Ventre gambling, we are adding a brief sketch of its history.

Gros Ventre myth, folk lore, and tradition have little to say on gambling. According to one folk story, given by Mrs Sleeping Bear, but unknown to Mrs Warrior, the hand game was first gotten from the thunder by a certain Tsē'ganis (Little Short Horns). There is no reference to gambling in the fairly complete cycle of sacred myths we gathered or in the trickster (Nihāt'ᵃ) cycle.[8] This absence, particularly from the trickster cycle, may give some slight ground for suspecting that gambling may not go back very far in Gros Ventre culture history.

525 Apart, however, from such speculative surmise, what is clear is that gambling was in full vigor among the Gros Ventre in the second half of the last century, and had been since at least around the early part of the century. It was in full swing from at least the early boyhood days of Lame Bull who was born in 1825.

525 182 Gros Ventre gambling, especially with the wheel and hand games, suffered a severe shock after the disappearance of the buffalo in 1884, as did the main structure of Gros Ventre culture and society. With the rapid collapse of the broad framework into which gambling had so trimly fitted, gambling itself, especially with the older games, rapidly toppled down. The last big wheel game remembered by five older informants—The Boy, Thick, Charles Buckman, Steven Bradley, Philip Shortman—occurred in 1893; the last big hand game in 1891.[9] Around the turn of the century not much of the older complex was

8 Gambling does however occur in the Found-in-the-Grass Gros Ventre folk story, according to The Boy. Gambling at the wheel game between Clotted-Blood and the Bull is recorded in the Clotted-Blood tale, by A. L. Kroeber, *Gros Ventre Myths and Tales* (Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History, vol. 1, pt. 3, 1907), p. 86.

[115] 9 When in the field we failed to obtain these exact dates. We are indebted for them to our conscientious, high-minded and exceptionally able interpreter, Thomas Main, who procured them for us from the above five elder informants and forwarded them to us with some other supplementary information by letter of September 25, 1946.

4: Flannery & Cooper E-5 (1939-1945) 1946
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left, although we still have reports of a hand game between the Gros Ventre and the Flathead, staged at Glacier Park, Montana, as late as 1922, in which Joe Assiniboine represented the Gros Ventre. Today neither the wheel game nor the 2-button hand game is played. 525 182

Hard times, for a short period near-famine conditions, prevailed for a while after 1884; an economy of abundance gave place to an economy of scarcity. [735] While a world survey of gambling reveals, so far as we can discern, no significant correlation between gambling and abundance or scarcity economies, extreme and sudden economic shock and shift, such as occurred among the Gros Ventre in the years immediately following 1884, may well have slowed up the gambling pace.

Around 1897 the non-gambling hand game was introduced, won favor, and [177] persists down to the present. Today there is little gambling among the Gros Ventre on the reservation. Most of what occurs among them takes place off [178] the reservation, at nearby white villages and towns, in the form of poker or other card games for money, between Gros Ventre and whites.

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7: Flannery E-5 (1940, 1945) 1947
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796 boine themselves considered the Grass dance as a modern form
575 of one of their own older soldier society dances.[15] Secondly there
178 were certain similarities between the original Star and Wolf dances on the one hand and the Grass dance on the other. In both types there was dancing to exhaustion and the employment of special officers to rouse the laggards,—the whip men in the first instance, the sword men in the other. Again women singers helped out occasionally in both. Still another feature in common was the custom of giving presents away, not to a relative who was a member, but in honor of that relative. Thus, the Grass dance became a part of Gros Ventres culture.

182 So long as Gros Ventre culture continued on its traditional eco-
178 nomic basis, the hunting of buffalo, the Grass dance fulfilled its function as the dance of the Wolf soldier society and was simply parallel to the dance of the rival Star society. The disappearance of the buffalo, however, wrought many changes in Gros Ventre life as it did in that of all of the Plains tribes. The Gros Ventres were fortunate in that the last large herd of buffalo happened to be in their hunting territory and thus they could benefit a little longer than most of their neighbors from this mainstay of their old way of life. This is not to say that prior to the extinction of the buffalo Gros Ventre culture was flourishing in pristine glory. Far from it. For one thing, at the time of the adoption of the
[[77]] Grass dance between 1875 and 1880, intertribal warfare, with which many aspects of their culture were interrelated, was at a minimum and was itself soon to disappear. Again, certain aspects of their ceremonial life had fallen into disuse, some of the Sacred Dances not having been given for years previously. Nevertheless, although the religious culture was dwindling, much was still left and the social side was relatively intact.

182 *Later period.* The break in economic life with the killing of
796 the last of the buffalo in 1884 was accompanied by the virtual disappearance of the Gros Ventre ceremonial organization. The public rites of a religious nature, which had formerly made for social solidarity as well, were abandoned. The last Sacrifice

[15] Lowie, loc. cit. p. 66.

7: Flannery E-5 (1940, 1945) 1947
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Dance (Sun Dance), for example, was given in that very year and, so far as our data go, but one Crazy Dance was held after that. The seasonal Flat Pipe rite was discontinued. Furthermore there was a breakdown in the socio-political life. The necessity for nomadic life had disappeared and as a consequence there was no longer need of policing the hunt or keeping order in the camp circle when the whole tribe gathered so that, with the further establishment of peace, the raison d'être for two rival soldier societies was gone.

In the transition period the missionaries were trying valiantly to fill the gap in religious life but did not offer a satisfactory solution for the social situation; nor did the Agency which had become the center of the new economic life. It was the Grass dance, which as we have seen survived in a somewhat changed form, that seems to have filled the void left in social life.

In its earlier form the Grass dance was purely social in nature, as was the Star dance, but the latter faded away while the former attained a position of heightened importance. One of the factors accounting for this fact seems to be that the Grass dance "had more to it," as our informants put it. The performance of the dog ritual was certainly far more spectacular than the simpler dance of the Star society and, in addition, it had semi-ceremonial connotations reminiscent of other features of the older Gros Ventre culture which were lacking from the Star dance. For example, the owners of the regalia in the Grass dance were likewise officers of several degrees of importance therein, as was the case in the performance of the Sacred Dances. Again, sex abstinence was required before dancing with the crow-belts as it was before participating in the Sacrifice Dance (Sun Dance) and before dancing with the Feathered Pipe. Ceremonial incensing of persons and equipment had been a marked characteristic of Gros Ventre religious life. The formal transfer of office and regalia duplicates the pattern of transfer of office of Pipe Keeper, transfer of painted lodges, and so on. Recounting of war deeds was frequently demanded in connection with many aspects of Gros Ventre life,—to validate the giving of a name, the erection of a

7: Flannery E-5 (1940, 1945) 1947
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796 gave away in his honor." When first adopted the Grass dance
178 offered only one such opportunity—and a relatively minor one.
431 As times changed, however, the Grass dance provided practically
156 the sole occasion for gaining prestige while at the same time
554 carrying out the old pattern of kinship obligation by enhancing the prestige of relatives.

The possibility in the later form of the Grass dance of paying for privileges, such as locking the door, or whipping those who did not get up to dance, gave further scope for the acquisition of prestige through liberality, as did also, of course, payments at transfer of office.

It was estimated by our informants that around 1900 as much as a thousand dollars in goods and cash changed hands at a single performance of the Grass dance. At that time it was not uncommon for the dance to be held at weekly intervals. So long as the Gros Ventre were relatively prosperous and had property to display and exchange according to the older patterns, the Grass dance continued to function. With increasing poverty, however, along
[735] with other factors such as the changing points of view and interests on the part of the younger generation, and the dying out of
[182] the older warriors, the Grass dance, the core of which was the dog ritual, gradually paled off leaving but the remnants of some of the round dances which had been added to the Grass dance as originally adopted from the Assiniboine.

Summary

796 Between 1875 and 1880 the Gros Ventres received the Grass
177 dance from the Assiniboine. From the date of adoption up to
575 about 1890 the Grass dance was performed only by members of one of the two soldier societies and the custodians of the ceremonial equipment were the officers. Offices were transferred among members according to the old Gros Ventre pattern.

796 The essential core of the Grass dance was the dog ritual, a
[262] ceremonial eating of dog flesh, carried out by the owners of the equipment with the assistance of four warriors selected from among the lay members. Other features of the program at each

7: Flannery E-5 (1940, 1945) 1947
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other features of the program at each
performance of the Grass dance included the "punishing" dance, 796
the smoking song, the forfeiture of property, the "throwing [533
away" of property represented by sticks, gift-giving in honor of 431]
loved ones.

In 1890 changes in the form of the Grass dance began to be notice- 796
able. By 1900 the Grass dance included all in the tribe who wished 178
to participate. The official personnel had been expanded to include four "chiefs," four war-bonnet owners, two owners of ceremonial black dresses, two women whip-owners and two female assistants. Transfer of all offices was, however, carried out as before.

The dog ritual continued unchanged to be the highlight of the program. Perhaps the most obvious change in procedure was the inclusion of round dances, especially the Ringtail dance, in which both men and women participated and for which "punishing" songs had been devised. The smoking song and the forfeiture of [533]
property were retained, but with some elaborations. Although the "throwing away" of property gradually disappeared, the gift-giving in honor of relatives was very much emphasized. Other very minor changes were inaugurated at intervals up until about 1916.

The changing functions of the Grass dance coincide with the changing form and can likewise be considered as of two periods, —the first from 1875–80 to 1890; the second from 1890 to 1916.

In the first period the function of the Grass dance was a relatively minor one. It was adopted, and fitted into place, as a substitute for the simpler and less colorful dance of the Wolf soldier society, and paralleled the dance of the other soldier society, the [575]
Star society. In view especially of the preliminary "begging" songs, the Grass dance seemingly was the expression of but one phase of the intense rivalry between the two soldier societies.

With the extinction of the buffalo in 1884 came the breakdown [182]
of the older culture. By 1890 not only had most of the public religious rites disappeared, but the social organization was greatly altered. As the economic basis was changed, the nomadic life and the camp circle were abandoned, and the two soldier societies no

7: Flannery E-5 (1940, 1945) 1947
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796 longer existed. The dance of one of them, the Grass dance, how-
178 ever, survived. In its changed form the Grass dance filled the void in social life during the transition from old to new.

With the admission of all to membership and through the addition of round dances in which all could actively participate, the Grass dance met the needs for group recreational outlets and for expression of social solidarity.

796 As the sole surviving institution which carried the concept of
178 graded offices and their transfer, the Grass dance met the need of
554 the individual for status along traditional lines. The expansion of offices allowed for the recognition of types of ability formerly premiated and opened the way for younger men as well as for women in emphasizing different kinds of ability.

Finally, the Grass dance met the need of the individual for prestige in accordance with the older pattern by offering opportunity for ostentatious liberality. By bestowing gifts publicly
[431] at the Grass dance, one could gain the coveted reputation for generosity, while at the same time fulfilling a substantial part of one's obligation to kinsmen.

796 The Grass dance continued to function in this way up to about
182 1916, after which time it began gradually to pale off, and to practically disappear by 1920. The few round dances carried on at present under the name "Grass dance" bear no appreciable relationship to the lively and colorful performances that are remembered by the older Gros Ventres as having been so stimulating and enjoyable.

8:Flannery E-5 (1940-1948)1960 NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

Her final rejoinder was such a witty and pointed one that everyone laughed heartily at her rival's expense. In this culture, of course, public ridicule was a far more effective retaliation than the biting and scratching that other women said frankly they would have indulged in when attacked.

Expression of emotional excess was institutionalized for the Gros Ventres, as for the rest of the Plains, in the bereavement situation. Upon the death of a husband, son, or father, a woman was expected to start wailing as soon as she heard the news, have her hair cut off, discard good clothes for old ragged ones, gash her arms and legs, go to the hills to mourn and cry, resisting for a time the pleas of her relatives to return, and being watched lest she attempt suicide. Coming Daylight was only a young woman when she was first widowed and the mourning pattern was still in full vogue. It is certain from other evidence than Coming Dayling had a deep affection for this husband to whom she had been given as a child-bride and in whose kindly and indulgent treatment she had found a pleasant escape from the rigorous discipline of her grandmother. Nevertheless the public expression of her grief was minimal—no abandonment for her. Although her sister was sent on the hills with her to keep watch over her in the usual way, Coming Daylight was easily persuaded to return shortly though she herself was proud of the fact that she had stayed out so long that she actually had got a frozen toe! In later years when all that was left of the ritual was the wailing out on the hills, she lost the son whom she herself, and everybody else, acknowledged as her favorite. She had not been on the hills very long when she experienced a significant dream, as follows. She was in a lodge at the rear of which was a big pile of tobacco mixture and a pipe. The owner of the lodge filled the pipe and approached her. She was frightened because she didn't smoke. The owner of the lodge however told her: "Look at these people." She looked and saw many with their hair cut and their bodies bleeding from the gashes inflicted in grief. The man then told her: "That is in the past. Nowadays your only consolation is in smoking." So she accepted the pipe and, after smoking it, she was painted in ceremonial fashion by each of those other mourners. Then the owner of the lodge dismissed her saying: "Now, go home and don't ever go on the hills and mourn again. But always smoke if you want to." She went home right after this dream and when she told her husband of it he accepted it as valid and persuaded her sister to prepare for Coming Daylight her first real smoke. She maintained that the habit subsequently developed was actually a great comfort to her.

The final area with which we shall be concerned here is the war complex—a vital aspect of the old Plains culture. Gros Ventre women were allowed direct but limited participation in these activities in the sense that, while they would not join a party of men who were going on horse-raiding or revenge expeditions, if opportunity offered they might exhibit the same kind of bravery that a man should show and derive considerable status therefrom. For instance, if one of the enemy fell nearby, the women rushed out from camp to count coup, and to grab trophies with which to inaugurate the relationship known as "enemy-friends." Coming Daylight, however, was never one to indulge in this sport. She told of the one—and to her extremely distasteful—occasion on which her hand literally was forced. It seems that during a raid on their camp one of the enemy was shot and her husband scalped him. The victim was lying not far from her lodge and, as her husband dashed off to pursue the rest of the Assiniboine, he shouted for her to come out and see what was going on. Coming Daylight saw the man lying there, face down, covered with blood. He was not dead